

Henry Ford
Dearborn, Mich.

Mar
20th
1930

Mr Charles L Clarke
Research Laboratory
General Electric Co
Schenectady N Y

Dear Mr Clarke:

We wish to acknowledge with many thanks your letter of the 15th inst. regarding the Edison type Z dynamo with serial No. 13.

We, too, think we are very fortunate in getting this old type Z dynamo in such a complete condition.

We are also very grateful to you for straightening us out on the nameplate information. If we had only stopped to think long enough we could have figured it out that the Columbia machine was type A and was made in 1880 while the Z machine was made beginning with 1881.

We are now fairly satisfied that when we are in search of information regarding early Edison dynamos the same can be obtained by writing directly to you. We thank you and greatly appreciate your prompt reply.

Yours very truly

Jas W. Bishop
JAS W BISHOP
Office of HENRY FORD

JWB MJ

March 15, 1930.

Mr. Jas. W. Bishop,
Mr. Henry Ford,
Dearborn, Mich.

Dear Mr. Bishop:

Your letter of the 13th, with accompanying photos of Edison 2 dynamos, No. 13, and of the name-plate of the Edison Electric Light Co. (thereon obtained from the Harding-Jones Paper Co., Excelsior, Ohio) is received.

The photos are welcome — and let me add that you have obtained a specimen of the 2 dynamo in beautifully complete condition. It may have been installed, as that paper company states, about 1885, in a mill near their factory. But about that time the Edison dynamos with long magnet cores were being superseded by the Edison-Hopkinson type with short, thick cores. The low number 13 of the name-plate would seem to indicate however, that the machine had been installed previously somewhere else — the manufacture of 2 machines began at the Edison Machine Works, New York City, in the spring of 1881, but not early enough, of course, for the S.S. Columbia plant, which was a year earlier, and in which steamship "A" machines were installed, made at Menlo Park.

No, I did not say that the the only Edison dynamos from the Edison Machine Works, with name-plates were the Columbia machines, but that the Columbia machines, being the first machines commercially made and sold, were the first to have name-plates thereon.

Referring again to the paper company, it may be quite likely that their 1885 date is put too late, and that the 2 machine was installed considerably earlier — a pardonable error after forty-five years.

Cordially yours,

Chas. L. Clarke.

Henry Ford
Dearborn, Mich.

Mar
13th
1930

Mr Charles L Clarke
Research Dept
General Electric Co
Schenectady N Y

Dear Mr Clarke:

I am attaching to this letter a photostat copy of the nameplate of an old Edison type Z dynamo which just arrived at Dearborn.

You will note that this is machine No. 13. As I recall the statement made by you during one of my visits to Schenectady, you said that the only Edison dynamos which left the Edison Machine Works with name plates on were those which were installed on the SS Columbia in 1880. While I am not making the above statement with any degree of certainty it is just my recollection of what you said. If I am wrong in this statement, I would like to have you correct me on it.

Please note that this photostat is the exact size of the name plate which was made of brass and nickel plated. We have had the plate cleaned up, re-nickelated and repolished, and the letters filled in with black to make them show up nicely.

On seeing the above nameplate, my first thought was that this had been one of the machines on the SS Columbia, but on checking up with the parties from whom we obtained it, they say that it was installed in a mill near their factory about the year 1885. I then consulted the book entitled "The History of the Incandescent Lamp" and find that the Columbia plant operated for 15 years which would make the date 1895 before the dynamos were taken off the SS Columbia and replaced with more modern ones.

Henry Ford
Dearborn, Mich.

Mr Charles L Clarke #2

3-13-30

The above dynamo is quite complete having the original head board switch on it with a flat spring pulling the switch in one of two positions, open or closed. I have had a photograph taken of this machine and will send one to you if it will assist you in anyway in the rebuilding of the old "A" dynamo that you are rehabilitating for us at Schenectady at the present time.

I shall be very glad to have your comments on this old machine.

Yours very truly

JAS W BISHOP
Jas. W. Bishop
Office of HENRY FORD

JWB MJ

P.S. Just received photos of above machine
so I am enclosing one for you. JWB.